

## House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

### **Rep. Ward Says Democrats Violate Spending Cap with \$27 Million Tax on Local Land Records**



HARTFORD – House Republican Leader Rep. Robert M. Ward of North Branford today said it took only hours for the Democrats to violate the Constitutional spending cap when they rammed through a new \$27 million tax on town hall filings, ostensibly to pay for farm land preservation.

“This is not just a procedural disagreement between Republicans and Democrats. This is a serious attack on our constitution,” Ward said in arguing against the legislation on the floor of the House. Republicans failed to turn back the Democrats on imposing the \$30 filing fee for local land records. The state would receive \$26 of the fee for a variety of programs, including promoting affordable housing, historic preservation, farmland preservation and for state employees salaries and benefits.

Republicans were angered because the legislation was never considered part of the overall state budget that was adopted early Tuesday morning in the House. Ward argued that the \$27 million generated by the fees would put the state over the constitutional cap and must be counted.

Democrats said that because the legislation refers to “distributing” funds and not “appropriating” funds, the \$27 million should not count against the cap. Ward said that argument was dishonest and outrageous.

“The Democrats subverted the will of the people who voted for the cap on spending and the constitution itself through a legislative slight of hand,” he said. “Today they demonstrated total disregard for the constitution and for an open legislative process.”

The Senate passed the measure last week before the state budget had been set and therefore prior to formal establishment of a spending cap. The cap limits growth in state spending to personal income growth.